



St. Louis Audubon Society



Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Recognizes Two Area Conservationists

by Jim Holsen

The St. Louis Audubon Society recognized the special talents of 2 area conservationists with awards at its annual dinner meeting on April 23.

Pat Waterston, board president of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, received the Conservationist of the Year award for her exceptional leadership during a period in which the Coalition conducted 3 petition drives for referendums on state, county, and city issues. Pat was also cited for her ability to engage conflicting parties in discussions, with a mutual respect for the reasonable concerns of their counterparts across the table.

Pat's talents have been most apparent during the preparation and implementation of the Forest Park Master Plan. As head of Citizens to Protect Forest Park, she sought, so far unsuccessfully, to have the 26-acre Arena site incorporated into plans for Forest Park.

Dr. Owen Sexton, biology professor at Washington University and director of the Tyson Research Center, was presented with the Dr. Robert J. Terry award, given for outstanding achievement in bringing to others a realization of the need for conservation of our natural resources. An early enthusiasm for snakes prompted Dr. Sexton to pursue field biology and ecological studies, leading to an influential career as a teacher and advocate for the preservation of our natural ecosystems. He is a founder of the Missouri Prairie Foundation and, with Marlin and Carole Perkins, of the Wild Canid Survival and Research Center, or Wolf Sanctuary.

After becoming director of the Tyson Research Center in 1996, at a time when the tract was threatened with development, Dr. Sexton worked to develop projects which would ensure its survival. He is particularly proud that the Field Science Program, which serves school children including many with minority and inner-city backgrounds, is attracting more participants.

Dr. Robert J. Terry, once the Anatomy Department chairman at the Washington University School of Medicine, helped to form the St. Louis Bird Club in 1916. He was influential in making science and conservation important to birders. In 1948, on a motion by Marshall Wagner, the St. Louis Bird Club became the first of the now over 500 local chapters of the National Audubon Society.

Award recipients were selected by the awards and scholarship committee, chaired by Julie Leemann and including Lynne Breakstone, Gary Giessow, and Edward Ortleb.

Revised St. Louis Area Bird Book Now Available

by Paul Bauer

Our regional bird book, *BIRDS OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA: Where and When to Find Them*, has been revised and reprinted and is now available in many local stores listed below. The original version of this book came on the market in December 1995. That printing was 3,000 copies, but they were all sold in 15 months.

This book has been much more popular than the authors or anyone else expected, and numerous people missed a chance to obtain a copy. Now with the help of a loan from the St. Louis Audubon Society, an action that supports our educational interests, 2,000 more copies of the revised version have been printed by the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. This support serves as another cooperative effort between these 2 societies.

Members may obtain copies of the revised book at their local Wild Bird Centers, Wild Bird Unlimited Stores, Wildbird Marketplace and other similar garden supply-type stores, the Missouri Botanical Garden Bookstore, the Shaw Arboretum Shop, and several local bookstores.

So if you already have a copy of the original book, should you consider getting the revised version? Actually, over 80 revisions were made; that is how much has changed in our birding world in just 4 years since the original records

were closed! We added 4 new birding locations and revised directions and instructions for several others, so the total birding locations described now exceed 125 places. Numerous revisions were necessary to the 17 colored maps to fit the revised directions.

We wanted to keep the page numbers and index unchanged. Where possible, revisions were made in the existing text space, but if necessary, the longer changes were added to an appendix, which has 10 additional pages. The book now has 202 pages.

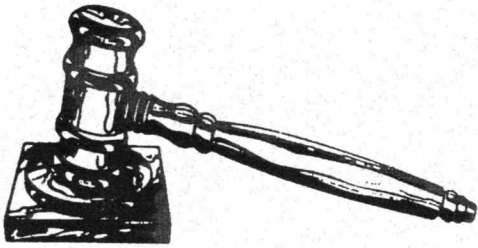
The appendix includes the above-mentioned corrections and additions to birding locations, changes in species names, significant new bird records, general lodging information for visitors, and a checklist of 357 species of birds seen in the St. Louis area since 1940.

The individual species reviews now total the 380 species that have ever been reported in our area. Nine new species were added in this revision. See the new book to find out which ones! The colored, seasonal occurrence bar graphs provide detailed visual information on what birds should be expected and how common they are for each 10-day period during the year. Best of all, the book has a spiral binding so it can lie open on the front seat of your car or on a windowsill at home.

So if you have *any* interest in birds, locations to find them, times when specific birds should be expected to arrive here, and the historic records of bird sightings around St. Louis, make it a point to go out and buy this beautiful book before these new copies are all gone!

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From Your President

by Jim Holsen

St. Louis Audubon Elects Officers and Board Members at Annual Meeting

St. Louis Audubon elected several new officers and board members at the annual dinner meeting held at Agusti's Restaurant on Thursday evening, April 23.

Sue Smith, a past director, was elected vice president for education, filling a post that has been vacant since the resignation of Chris Serbia late last summer. Jim Holsen was re-elected to a second term as president. Bill Groth, Jr. was re-elected to a second term as vice president for conservation, and Arthur Montgomery accepted a third term as vice president for finance. Mary Lou Miller was re-elected to a second term as treasurer while Mary Dueren continues as secretary.

Dallas Cox, Tom Day, and Dale Ponce were re-elected to their second 3-year terms as members of the board of directors. Vicki Flier, Missy Stern, and Anna Stevens are newly elected directors for the Society. Last fall, Michael Grant and Vicky Walker were voted in as board members to fill vacant positions.

The nominating committee, chaired by Bill Salsgiver, also included Dave Tylka and Blaine Ulmer.

Ron Klataske, National Audubon Society West Central Regional Vice President from Manhattan, Kansas, presented a slide lecture on "Audubon, Perspective in America's Heartland: Prairies, Rivers, and Wildlife." Ron's slides included many spectacular views of the Platte River sanctuary for Sandhill Cranes and of a new national park in the Kansas Flint Hills, both of which exist largely because of his efforts. Ron has also been working with local Audubon chapters on the restoration of the lower Missouri River.

Frank Gill Makes Presentation to St. Louis Audubon Members

by John Solodar

Frank Gill, vice president of science for the National Audubon Society (NAS), gave a luncheon presentation to 15 members of St. Louis Audubon on Monday, April 6. The subject of his talk was "The New Audubon" and its focus on "back to birds."

Dr. Gill was in St. Louis to accept the presidency of the American Ornithological Union at its week-long meeting in downtown St. Louis. Dr. Gill is the author of the most widely used textbook on ornithology in the United States.

Gill gave evidence of the growing interest in birding in the United States with quotes from various sources. Americans apparently prefer birding over golf when it comes to going on vacations to reduce stress. There is a change in the image of birders from the 1950's to the 90's. There are now enough of us that birders have become politically effective and strong, in addition to being an economic force which spends \$5.2 billion per year on birding goods and services.

As anecdotal evidence of these trends, Gill cited an instance where hotel keepers in 1 section of Texas used to encourage the elimination of brushy undergrowth along the edge of the coastal sand in order to keep a clean appearance. So many birders now come to this region that the local government has undertaken restoration of the undergrowth in order to attract the small birds which use it.

Dr. Gill showed how Roger Tory Peterson hooked people into conservation by first getting them interested in birds. His guides enabled people to put a name on each type of bird. Being able to put that name on a bird eventually led to birding with a purpose and therefore to citizen science projects such as Christmas bird counts, breeding bird surveys and Project FeederWatch. All of these verified evidence of declining bird populations. This, in turn, has led to the creation of the National WatchList by the NAS. It now covers 105 birds, or about 1 out of every 6 species of North American birds. NAS now wants to step this list down to the state level with citizen input on documenting bird populations on the WatchList of each state.

Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, were the next topic Gill discussed. IBAs are drawn up by having local people and agencies rank all of the birding areas within each state. This enables

the various groups in that state to lock in on a focus of the 100 or so most important birding areas. With this list in hand, habitat and land protection schemes can be brought to bear on the areas within each state that most need such support.

This program has been very successful in New York, where it has been found that IBAs bring together diverse partners. IBAs work very well for state and local chapters with the result, in New York, that special protection for IBAs is now being given by state law. North Carolina also has a strong program going. A manual from NAS is available on how to start an IBA program. According to a map which Gill showed, Missouri has recently signed on to start an IBA program, but he did not know how or by whom this was done.

Lastly, Gill cited 2 programs which are having a very important impact in recruiting citizen involvement to the task of monitoring bird populations and migrations. This first of these is the Internet website BirdSource, which NAS has put together in conjunction with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. (See related article on BirdSource<<http://birdsource.cornell.edu>> on page 6.) BirdSource allows the average birder to add his species counts to a national data base and to monitor the aggregate result of the counts of other birders throughout the country. Terrific maps display the data versus time so that the extent of each species in each season of the year can be followed from home by anyone with access to the Internet. A lot of other information is available at this site including bird calls. During one 3-day trial period in February, BirdSource generated 1.2 million hits with 18,000 households per hour entering data at peak times.

The second program which Gill described is call Birds with a Purpose. This is being conducted in a school in the Bronx, wherein the traditional math and art programs have been replaced by one based on studying the local pigeons and house sparrows. Evidently, the first year of the program was so successful that student test scores at this school moved from the bottom of the schools in the Bronx to the top. The CSX Company is now helping this program by encouraging the growth of bird habitat in its railroad yards, which tend to be near the city centers which, in turn, contain the types of schools at which Birds with a Purpose is aimed.

Get to Know . . .

Lynne Breakstone

(This is the twenty-third in a series of articles written about and by St. Louis Audubon board members themselves so that all our membership can be better acquainted with our decision makers on the board.)

A relatively new board member of the St. Louis Audubon Society, I am proof that one very definitely does not need a scientific or environmental background in order to have a role in this group: I teach French at Washington University, and all my academic work has been in the humanities. Perhaps I love the natural world for the same reasons I love literature and foreign languages: all 3 open us up to beauty, to complexity, to wonder.

My personal great-bird experiences have been: 1) *just happening* to be on a tour in the Everglades when a Key West Quail Dove (looks like a very colorful pigeon) was attracting birders from all over the country. Never seen before in the United States, this bird had apparently been blown off course by a hurricane; 2) seeing a hummingbird nest right at eye level with 3 pea-sized eggs in it in Los Angeles. A week later we got to see the teenie weenie babies and watch them being fed; 3) having a flock of 50-60 Cedar Waxwings spend a day in the walnut tree right outside my kitchen window in California. At sunset they *all* sat faced towards the sun until dark as if sharing their own sundown ritual.

Recently I have been volunteering at Wild Bird Rehabilitation, a clinic which takes in sick and wounded birds, from crows on down to hummingbirds, and cares for them until, hopefully, they can be re-released. My main job lately has been feeding baby birds; I hope to learn enough to be able someday to diagnose and treat birds which are brought in.

I became an Audubon board member because of my concern for loss of wildlife habitat. We have a large membership, and if all of us do *something* to help keep our natural systems healthy, we can continue to have a positive impact.

* * * *

If you would like to volunteer at **Wild Bird Rehabilitation**, please call 984-9116. Watch for information about this organization and a wish list of items in a future edition of *Tale Feathers*.

Now Playing at a Forest Near You— Periodical Cicadas!!

by Mike Arduser

The unfolding of spring's first wildflowers, the gobble of a wild turkey in the crisp April dawn, and the migration of monarch butterflies on a warm October day—natural events mark the passing of the year like signposts.

Some natural events, though, follow a different calendar. And this past month, one of nature's most dramatic natural events—the emergence of 13- and 17-year periodical cicadas—erupted across Missouri and in parts of adjacent states, in a way that hasn't happened since 1777, the year that decided the fate of the American Revolution.

Big black, noisy bugs with beady red eyes and orange wings, the harmless periodical cicadas (genus *Magicicada*) are a food bonanza for many fish and wildlife species and a biological mystery for the curious naturalists among us.

Cicadas as a whole are a worldwide group of insects with about 20 species in Missouri; 6 of these are periodical cicadas. Nymphs (cicada young) live underground and feed on sap from roots. All have life cycles of several to many years in length, the longest being the 13- and 17-year cycles of the periodical cicadas.

Periodical cicadas live only in the eastern United States and exist as 3 pairs of species. Each pair includes a species with a 13-year life cycle and another species with a 17-year life cycle. Except for the difference in life cycle length, the 2-member species of a pair are indistinguishable—they look, sound, and act alike.

The 3 pairs of species, however, are recognizably different from one another. The largest is the *Magicicada* "decim" pair of species (*tredecim* and *septendecim*, 13- and 17-year respectively); the underside of the abdomen is orange, and the song sounds like someone humming and whistling at the same time. The *Magicicada* "cassini" pair of species (*tredecassini* and *cassini*) are considerably smaller, the underside of the abdomen is all black, and the song is a loud buzzing, rising and falling in intensity. The *Magicicada* "decula" pair (*tredecula* and *septendecula*) have thin orange bands across the underside of their abdomens and a song that sounds like clicking and buzzing.

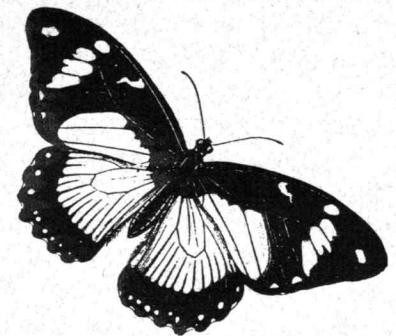
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dedication of Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area — Friday, June 12, at 10 am through mid-afternoon. The River Projects Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will dedicate the Riverlands Demonstration Area, 1,200 acres of wetlands and prairie adjacent to the new Melvin Price Locks and Dams at Alton, Illinois. Various organizations will maintain booths and other events. This is a chance to become familiar with Riverlands, which has become one of the best areas in the metropolitan area for seeing ducks, shorebirds, and marsh and prairie birds.

From I-270 in North County, take Hwy 367 until it joins US Hwy 67 at Lindbergh Blvd. Follow US 67 to the Clark Bridge across the Mississippi River at Alton. Just before the bridge, turn right toward the FISCAs service station. Continue a short distance into the Area, to find the River Projects Office building on the left.

For more information, call Brian Markert at 899-2600 or Jim Holsen at 822-0410.



Butterfly Counts — Saturdays, June 20 and September 5. Counts are held at 5 different locations in the St. Louis area with different coordinators; call the appropriate coordinator to volunteer:

Busch Conservation Area—
Bill Brandhorst, coordinator, 965-7269

Cuivre River State Park—
Bruce Shuette, coordinator, 528-7247

Powder Valley Nature Center—
Doug Jackson, coordinator, 301-1500

Valley View Glade—
Marshall Magner, coordinator, 961-4588

Victoria Glade—
George Winkler, coordinator, 993-1652

The Conservation Corner

Chip Mills Threaten Missouri Ozark Forests

by Jim Holsen

Cutting of timber from the Missouri Ozark forests for commercial purposes began in the 1860's. Cutting peaked between 1900 and 1910. Large lumber companies operated on a "cut-out and get-out policy"; when the timber was gone, the companies left.

A sawmill at Grandin, said to be the largest in the state and probably in the country, was closing in 1910 as the supply of timber began to run out. Missouri's forests were left in ruins. "Had the cutting been selective, the land would have regained its value, but the young trees were destroyed in getting out the older ones, and the hills, when the big operations ceased, were all but stripped of their cover," according to the Works Progress Administration's 1960's *Guidebook to Missouri*. By the mid-1930's, soil erosion had seriously affected 34 million of Missouri's 44 million acres.

An oak-hickory forest requires 70 to 80 years to recover from such devastation, so those who grew up in the 30's are only now seeing the fruits of the efforts at soil conservation and good forest management initiated during those earlier years.

Now we are faced with another threat—the proliferation of high capacity chip mills that satisfy the demand for paper, particle board, rayon, and other products. Some 140 such operations in the southeastern states have led to increased clearcutting, damaging forests and causing increased soil erosion and loss of wildlife habitat. Already 2 such chip mills are operating in Missouri, and some timber is being shipped to chip mills in Arkansas and elsewhere.

This past January the Missouri Audubon Council gave its highest priority to opposing high capacity chip mills and the threat they pose to our state forests. The Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, and other groups are equally concerned.

St. Louis Audubon and the Missouri Audubon Council joined other groups in testifying for a bill before the General Assembly that called for a moratorium on new chip mill operations until a study of their environmental impact could be conducted. That bill did not get beyond the hearing stage, but it did bring the subject out in

the open for further discussion. On Lobby Day, April 22, St. Louis Audubon and the Missouri Audubon Council were represented by a group who met with Brad Ketcher, Governor Carnahan's Chief of Staff, to discuss the chip mill issue, among others.

Tom Uhlenbrock's article in the *Post-Dispatch* for Sunday, May 31, provided a dramatic illustration of the differences between clearcutting and good forest management, such as that promoted by Leo Drey on his Pioneer Forest lands. Good forest management practices pay off in the long run, but one problem is that the average tenure for land ownership in the Missouri Ozarks seems to be about 7 years. Short-term owners are tempted to look for the short-term profits promised by clearcutting.

As this article is being written, there is hope that Governor Carnahan will call for a moratorium on permits for new chip mills until an environmental study can be completed. Steve Mahfood, director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, is said to be recommending that action. The Missouri Department of Conservation seems to be on the fence; its ecology committee is said to have recommended the moratorium while the forestry committee is said to oppose it. The Department met for a review of its policies on Friday, May 29, but the results are not yet known. Speaker Gaw in the Missouri House is said to favor an environmental study.

Missouri Audubon members should take a particular interest in this issue. In recent years, there has been concern over the decline in many songbirds, particularly for many of the neotropical migrants that winter in Central or South America and breed in North America. Forest-loving birds that need deep forest cover for protection from cowbirds and predators suffer when the forests are fragmented, allowing these parasites and predators access to their nesting sites. For instance, the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois is said to be so fragmented that the breeding success of many migrants is so low that the birds are far from able to reproduce themselves. It is hypothesized that many of the birds found breeding there were fledged in the Central Ozarks. If we allow the Ozarks to become fragmented, what viable nesting habitat will remain for these birds?

Spring River Conference Adopts New Name

by Mary Dueren

Our trip to the plains of Nebraska was off to an inauspicious start. El Nino had dispensed arctic cold and deep snow to the Great Plains. Dianne Johnson and I wondered how the Sandhill Cranes would deal with this late winter blast.

When we landed at Eppley Field in Omaha with our high school charges in tow, the air temperature was 5° above zero. I didn't ask about the wind chill. Dianne assured her 3 students (Alicia, Jenna, and Doug) from Eureka High School that bird watching this weekend would be wonderful. As we drove west to Kearney, the miles melted away the huge snow drifts and brought the temperature back to a more moderate (30°) range. Although there was still snow in Kearney, it was not nearly the volume we had seen in Omaha.

After settling in the hotel, we headed to one of our favorite spots—Fort Kearney Recreation Area. There is a connected trailway here and an old rail bridge that crosses the Platte River. As our band of 5 started down the 1/2-mile trail, a small group of white-tailed deer crossed our path. As we arrived at the bridge, the sun had just set, and the full moon was rising over the Platte. What a sight! Rosy gold lingered on the western horizon, and liquid gold moonlight reflected in the river to the eastern horizon.

Sandhills were flying everywhere, but not roosting in the river. The deep cold had frozen many of the shallow channels, and large ice flows were running in the deeper channels. The cranes roosted in nearby fields in very large numbers. We told Alicia, Jenna, and Doug to cup their hands behind their ears to amplify the crane calls and the sound of wind in their wings. They were suitably impressed with this technique.

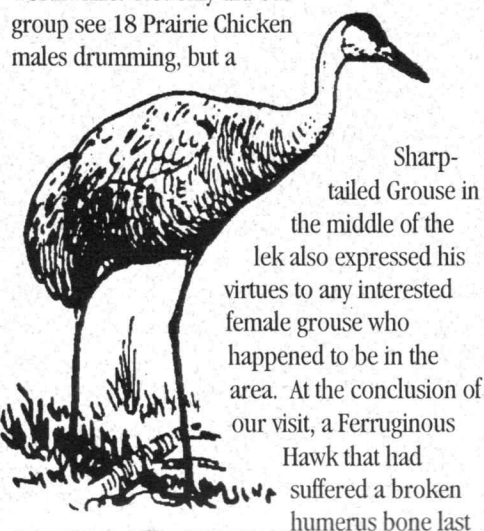
Our first early-morning visit was to the southeast tower blind on Rowe Sanctuary, a National Audubon Sanctuary. Shortly after sunrise, the Sandhills could be seen in a large field across the river. Crane rise came about an hour later when huge formations rose from nearby, departing the river and fields.

We returned to the hotel at 8 a.m. to get ready for the next excursion to Funk Lagoon, a natural rainwater basin that is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Waterfowl Protection Area. We were told by our tour guide that many Snow Geese and other species of waterfowl had already left the staging areas. We still saw large numbers of Snow, White-fronted, Ross, and Canada Geese.

Next we attended the opening of the Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, formerly known as the

Spring River Conference. The change was made to celebrate 28 years of learning and sharing and also to celebrate a year focused on managing the Platte through cooperation rather than confrontation. The celebration was opened with a wonderful program by Kent Klegg, Whooping Crane biologist, who successfully led 4 young Whoopers and 6 Sandhills behind his ultralite plane from Idaho to New Mexico.

I went on a field trip to see a Prairie Chicken lek at a ranch about an hour northeast of Kearney. This was a new trip added to the conference which was well attended and quite worthwhile. Not only did our group see 18 Prairie Chicken males drumming, but a



Sharp-tailed Grouse in the middle of the lek also expressed his virtues to any interested female grouse who happened to be in the area. At the conclusion of our visit, a Ferruginous Hawk that had suffered a broken humerus bone last

October was released back to the wild plains. The hawk was rehabilitated by the Nebraska Raptor Recovery Center. The bird launched himself towards the northwest. He was last seen warming himself in the rising sunshine.

The conference was really going when we returned. There were many excellent programs and speakers throughout the day. At lunch, John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, spoke of the commitment of NAS to the Platte and his vision of NAS in the future. Saturday evening's banquet featured Frank Gill, NAS director of science. His enthusiastic presentation about the joint venture with Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology was excellent. (See related article about the BirdSource website on page 6.)

On Sunday, Dianne and her students ventured to the lek. I later attended a Regional Audubon Leadership Breakfast, a sharing of what other chapters are doing. There were more programs given throughout Sunday morning. The celebration was concluded with a thoughtful, reminiscence by Pauline Drobney, biologist at Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa.

There is no doubt in my mind that this trip touched 3 young souls who have never traveled for the purpose of birdwatching or an environmental conference before.

A Spring Full of Birding Trips — What Could Be Better Than That!

by Jim Malone

Since the last edition of *Tale Feathers*, the St. Louis Audubon Society hosted several birding trips. The trips began with an outing to Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area near Alton, Illinois, on March 28. About 20 people were present for a good day of early spring birding. We saw 12 duck species including both Common Teals, Shovelers, Gadwalls, Wood Ducks, Canvasbacks, Scaup, Buffleheads, Ruddys, and Common and Red-breasted Mergansers. Non-duck species included the Great Egret, Tree Swallow, Canada Goose with very young goslings, and Pectoral Sandpipers. Sparrows were represented by American Tree, Field, Song, Swamp, White-crowned, and Eurasian Tree species.

Our annual woodcock walk/owl prowls on April 18 was well attended (over 40 participants), and the birds certainly did their part to make it a great outing. We started out finding a couple of Common Snipes, Swamp Sparrows, and a Sora Rail at the shorebird area. As it began to get dark, we moved to an area near the Prairie Trail where woodcocks had been "peenting" earlier in the spring. As soon as everyone was in place, the calls began, followed by numerous display flights of these amazing creatures. While the woodcocks were putting on their show, a few of us also heard a Great Horned Owl hooting off in the distant woods. To cap off the evening, several of us went to the Fallen Oak Nature Trail, where we heard and then saw a pair of Barred Owls.

The month of May began with a bird walk at Shaw Arboretum in Gray Summit. Twenty-eight attendees were treated to a fine day with a good variety of birds. Although the numbers and variety of warblers were somewhat disappointing this year, the raptors seen on this trip were a nice surprise. Some highlights of the trip included great views of a Lincoln's Sparrow near the manor house, along with Yellow-throated and White-eyed Vireos and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. At the edge of the prairie area, we chased a small group of Prairie Warblers and heard Blue-winged Warblers. A pair of rather agitated Yellow-breasted Chats were also seen by many of those present along the edge of the prairie. Raptors on the day's list included several Turkey Vultures circling around throughout the day, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks over the prairie, and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered (always a good bird for the area) Hawks at

various locations throughout the walk. A group of nearly 50 Broad-winged Hawks rose from the woods as the day warmed enough to develop rising thermal currents, creating a migration "kettle" right over our heads. Other birds seen on this trip included 7 sparrow species, 4 woodpecker species, and a rather loud Louisiana Waterthrush along a stream near the prairie.

May 3 marked the first of a pair of consecutive Sunday bird walks at Forest Park, for International Migratory Bird Week. Both of these walks were well attended by humans, but many of the birds failed to make an appearance. Although the woodpeckers were well represented on these walks, we were able to locate only 11 warbler species in the 2 days combined (as compared to 15 or more on each trip last year), and 2 this year were by call only. The variety of Thrushes was limited to Swainson's, Hermit, and the ever-present American Robin. Some of the more exciting sightings of the 2 events included White-eyed, Solitary, and Red-eyed Vireos; Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Black-throated Green, Palm, and Black-and-White Warblers; Ovenbird; a young male Summer Tanager molting into its bright red, summer plumage for the first time; and a Great-crested Flycatcher.

In the middle of May, a day trip took us to the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area near Columbia. Normally, water from the Columbia sewage treatment facilities is supplemented from nearby streams and used to maintain active wetlands, which are seasonally regulated to foster shorebird habitat during migration times for these species and feeding and refuge areas during waterfowl migration. Unfortunately, the wetlands areas within Eagle Bluffs were mostly dry when we arrived, drained to plant grain in preparation for the fall waterfowl migration. In spite of these disappointing accommodations, the group did get good looks at a Lark Sparrow next to the road. We saw a breeding pair of Great-tailed Grackles, a Yellow-headed Blackbird, Sora, and 2 very nice American Bitterns that flew a couple of times from the grassy area near the final water treatment ponds. We also experienced the screaming orange of male Baltimore Orioles, Pied-billed Grebes, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers, and several varieties of swallows. We ended this trip by stopping at Rock Bridge State Park south of Columbia. This was an interesting place with long tunnels of rock and entries into an extensive

system of caves underlying the entire region. Although our arrival coincided with the hottest time of day (when bird activity is usually the lowest), we saw groups of Northern Rough-winged Swallows swooping through the Rock Bridge tunnel and a Louisiana Waterthrush feeding a recent fledgling along the stream.

The following day, several members of the St. Louis Audubon Society and Webster Groves Nature Study Society met with Mike Arduser at one of the Missouri Department of Conservation's newest locations in northern St. Louis County. Mike led us out onto the flood plains of Columbia Bottoms to let us see the potential this area holds for the development/conservation of a number of habitats at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. This trip will help establish a baseline from which to judge the progress of this site as it develops. Among the species seen or heard were Dickcissel, Northern Bobwhite, Cattle Egrets, Red-tailed Hawk, a possible Bobolink, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, woodpeckers, flycatchers, swallows, Blue-winged Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, both resident Orioles, and Eurasian Tree Sparrows.

The final bird walk of the 1997-98 calendar year took place on May 23 at Castlewood State Park in St. Louis County. We had yet another enthusiastic group of birders. We began our explorations on the Grottpeter Trail, going a short distance up the hill near Kiefer Creek. Nesting Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen by many along this trail, and a few vireos were calling from the nearby trees. Then we followed the river trail through multiple habitats, searching for nesting warblers, thrushes, and others. The list of birds seen on this portion of our day included the Pileated Woodpecker, American Redstart, Fish Crow, and a calling Red-shouldered Hawk (or a very good Blue Jay), along with great looks at Prothonotary Warblers, Swainson's and Grey-cheeked Thrushes, Ovenbirds, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Northern Parula. Despite the heavy foliage and mosquitoes, everyone seemed to have a good time and see lots of good birds.

This concludes the birding trips from the 1997-98 calendar of events. We will be scheduling another year of trips at our July calendar planning session. I would like to express my heart-felt thanks for the help and support many have given this last year! The efforts of great leaders and participants are critical to the continued success of our trips, and you have all done a great job! See you in September when we start the process with fall migration. Good birding!



BirdSource: Joint Website of NAS and Cornell Lab

by Mary Dueren

The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology have set up a wonderful website on the Internet. This website has already proven itself a useful tool in obtaining data from bird watchers from all across North America. The use of citizen science has given researchers mounds of data to analyze.

The website was launched in February of this year. Although huge press coverage was planned, the crisis in Iraq limited the announcement.

At the bottom of the home page can be found 11 hotlinks: North American Breeding Bird Survey, Classroom Bird Watch, Cornell Nest Box Network, BirdSource Maproom, WatchList, Great '98 Backyard Bird Count, Winter Finch Survey, Project FeederWatch, Christmas Bird Count, Patuxent Bird InfoCenter, and Project FeederWatch Trends. Another hotlink created for the spring, summer, and fall is Warbler Watch. At this site, you can learn more about warblers that have migrated to North America. You can also complete a "form" of warblers you may have observed in your own backyard or even on a bird walk. This data will be compiled over the entire season. Already, trends are being observed. The other links are also fun.

The Christmas Count link has all the data from the complete Christmas counts of the entire country for the last 98 years! The Classroom Bird Watch is a useful tool for teachers, and Project FeederWatch is Cornell's tool for collecting data during the winter months.

There is so much information at this website that you can spend hours just looking around! Have fun and check it out at <http://birdsource.cornell.edu>. You can also get the website through www.audubon.org.

THANK YOU

EDWARD ORTLEB, *for contribution toward awards for St. Louis Audubon annual dinner meeting.*

International Migratory Bird Day a Big Success

by Mary Dueren

This year's International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) had a change in venue, which contributed to the big success of the event. Due to a conflict in schedule and date, St. Louis Audubon decided to participate in the St. Louis Earth Day Community Festival for only 1 day. Our presentation/booth would be dedicated to IMBD. The Earth Day organizers felt that our display would be best suited at the Ridgeway Center of the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Before we were even unpacked, Earth Day revelers and garden-goers were asking questions and picking up literature! Our merry band of participants included not only Audubon members but also representatives from the Wild Bird Rehabilitation, Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge, and Eureka High School Environmental Club.

All of the following volunteers deserve a big thank you for their efforts and hard work:

Wild Bird Rehabilitation—

Carol Kershner
Lisa Pries

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge—

Ellen Heilhecker

Eureka HS Environmental Club—

Jenna Bollinger
Doug Burgess
Pat Corley
Brandon Kranz
Kristen Luecken
Alicia Robinson
Rae Smith
Eric Walberg

St. Louis Audubon—

Trish Abbene
Paul Bauer
Lynne Breakstone
Ron Darling
Mary Dueren
Jim Holsen
Dianne Johnson
Jim Malone
Stan McLean
Jerry Miller
Mary Lou Miller
Dale Ponce
Bill Salsgiver

Thanks to Birding Leaders for NAOC Field Trip Support

by Paul Bauer

The recent North American Ornithological Conference held in St. Louis in early April was a huge success, thanks in part to the 15 volunteer birding leaders who supported the 9 separate field trips.

The convention was the largest to date for the 6 supporting organizations and was attended by over 1,400 persons. Approximately 780 papers were presented. However, the field trips had to be limited to about 125 persons, because of the available number of van drivers and birding leaders.

The birding field trips included half-day excursions to Riverlands, Forest Park-Kennedy Forest, and Tower Grove Park. Full-day trips included the Shaw Arboretum and Tyson Research Center, St. Charles County from Busch Conservation Area to Riverlands, and Riverlands plus Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge. Overnight trips went to Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Missouri and west to visit Eagle Bluffs and booming Greater Prairie Chickens in central Missouri. Several trips had brief stops at North Riverfront Park to visit the Eurasian Tree Sparrow colony there (F-3, page 31 in *BIRDS OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA: Where and When to Find Them*), and in all cases, we had many sightings of this sparrow in minutes.

The weather during the week of April 6-12 was near perfect, but, of course, it was early for the neotropical migrants.

Our sincere thanks to the 15 following persons who filled 25 leader positions on the field trips:

Richard Coles
Mike Flieg
Susan Gustafson
Paul Johnson
Randy Korotev
Kent Lannert
Bob McFall
Jim Malone
Dave Pierce
Bill Rowe
John Solodar
Michael Thelen
Mike Treffert
Blaine Ulmer
Paul Bauer

The true highlights of the convention were the 2 outdoor social nights held at the St. Louis Zoo/Living World and at the Missouri Botanical Garden. These entire facilities were open for all of the convention attendees and the above helpers and their spouses. The birds in the Zoo's Bird House may never be the same again, with all the noise from so many staring people when the birds wanted to sleep! This experience was a true thrill. Also impressive were the numbers of birds this group found at the Garden during the twilight hours in early April. We should be extremely proud of these 2 world-class institutions in our city. Everyone was extremely impressed with both of these social events.

Thanks again to each of you who helped.



Periodical Cicadas

from page 3

Periodical cicadas also occur in "year classes" or broods; a brood consists of either 13-year or 17-year species, but never both. Broods emerge on a 13- or 17-year schedule, and their appearance is predictable. In fact, one can find periodical cicadas almost every year somewhere in the eastern United States, although there are only 5 or 6 broods of periodical cicadas that extend into Missouri. It is the 2 largest of these broods (brood 4, 17-year, and brood 19, 13-year) that emerged this May. Brood 4 (all three 17-year species) occurs in, roughly, the northwestern third of Missouri, and brood 19 (all three 13-year species) occurs in most of the remainder of the state. The 2 broods may contact each other in places like Chariton County, Putnam County, and Henry County.

Enjoy these cicadas while you can! While brood 19 will emerge again in eastern Missouri in 2011 and brood 4 in northwestern Missouri in 2015, these 2 broods will not emerge together again until the year 2219, 221 years from now.

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Mrs. Katherine Chambers, Membership Chairperson
St. Louis Audubon Society 7XCH8
7024 Forsyth
St. Louis, MO 63105

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Our Phone Number

To contact the St. Louis Audubon Society, please call (314) 822-6595.

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